

## **CITY OF GREENFIELD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY- FALL 2022**

This community development strategy was prepared by the City of Greenfield, Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD), in partial fulfillment of the requirements for submitting its annual Mini-Entitlement CDBG application.

### ***Greenfield in Regional Context***

Greenfield is a city of approximately 17,450 people and is the largest community in Franklin County, the most rural county in Massachusetts. It is situated in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts. Settled in 1686, incorporated as a town in 1753 and incorporated as a city in 2002, Greenfield's strategic location at the junction of the Connecticut and Green Rivers and at the head of navigation of the Connecticut River made it a natural crossroads. With the Multi-Modal Transit Center all bus services; local, regional and national; are available from one central location. Four rail lines run north-south and east-west out of Greenfield and a general aviation facility is only 7 miles away in neighboring Montague. High speed communications access is available.

Greenfield has always been the economic and employment center of Franklin County, as well as the seat of county government. Early access to water power and transportation influenced the development of the machine tool and cutlery industries for which the city is famous. This precision manufacturing background has led to the evolution of a strong advanced manufacturing sector which joins with the health care and education sectors as our major economic activities. At the same time, Greenfield retains significant acres of prime agricultural land still in active use and is the gateway to vacation areas in the Berkshires and to Vermont and New Hampshire to the north. Greenfield is the lead community in numerous county wide initiatives that promote housing choice, economic expansion and natural resource protection. Its high quality of life and low real estate values, together with a skilled labor force, make it attractive to new residents and businesses seeking to expand.

### ***Planning in Greenfield***

In 2002 the Town of Greenfield adopted a new charter establishing a city form of government with an elected mayor and council of 13 members.<sup>1</sup> The Mayor's Office of Community and Economic Development partners with other key municipal departments (Planning, Department of Public Works, Recreation Department, Council on Aging, and Public Safety), committees (Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee, Crossroads Cultural District, Greenfield Redevelopment Authority, Greenfield Housing Authority, Commission on Disability Access, Greenfield Local Cultural District, and Community Preservation Committee) and regional organizations (Community Action of Pioneer Valley, Opioid Task Force, Franklin County Resource Network, Greenfield Business Association, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin Regional Council of Government) to assess community needs and develop plans that guide our community development priorities.

### ***Key Planning Documents***

The City of Greenfield is committed to an ongoing comprehensive public planning process that assesses community needs and guides community development. Major planning documents form the basis for the city's development. They are: the

- Bank Row Urban Renewal Plan (2006, updated 2008);
- Open Space and Recreation Plan (2012);
- Town of Greenfield Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2014);
- Sustainable Greenfield, Greenfield's Comprehensive Sustainable Master Plan (2014).
- ADA Self Assessment and Transition Plan (2019)

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- Court Square Streetscape Report (2018)
- First National Bank Market and Feasibility Study (2020)
- Vacant Storefront Designation MOBD -2018
- Greenfield Crossroads Cultural District Renewal – August 2021
- Greenfield Downtown Business District Assessment and Market Analysis (January 2021)
- Greenfield Local Rapid Recovery Plan and Priorities– August 2021
- Community Preservation Plan 2022-2023
- Greenfield Streetscape Improvement Plan – September 2022
- Downtown Revitalization Plan Update – in process
- **Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2022).**  
The City of Greenfield participates actively in the development and implementation of the CEDS Program, a keystone efforts of the greater Franklin County region’s economic development planning efforts.
- **Franklin County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) (2021-2023)**  
The City of Greenfield participates in the CHIP Network, whose vision is that all residents of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region will have the opportunity to pursue healthy lifestyles, to participate in shaping the systems that affect their health, and to achieve social, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

### ***Common Themes***

With such diverse planning documents, it is important to identify common themes and elements that run through and provide a unifying framework for an overall plan of action. Some common themes we have identified are:

- Quality of life is a key to both the heritage and the future of Greenfield. Housing opportunities (both affordable and market rate), economic competitiveness for businesses (both locally-owned and nationally-based), strong educational opportunities, a well trained and healthy workforce, caring for citizens in need, transportation improvements and cultural and recreational attractions are the strengths upon which Greenfield’s future quality of life will depend.
- Concentrate development in the established neighborhoods and the business core to make better use of existing infrastructure and preserve undeveloped open space, farmlands and historic assets for future generations. Concentrating development capitalizes on the town’s prior investment in its roads, sidewalks, and utility lines and controls costs for expansion and maintenance of new facilities. It conserves land, integrates uses and helps foster a sense of Greenfield as a “special” place.
- Maintain and enhance Greenfield’s traditional position as the economic, employment and transportation hub of Franklin County. Greenfield has a traditional and historic town center that provides local employment, educational, cultural, religious and recreational opportunities and has continued to have immense potential to be a vibrant hub of economic and cultural activity for Franklin County and beyond. Local businesses and in-town shopping areas must be supported. New growth in appropriate areas must be promoted. Preservation of the pedestrian-friendly urban fabric and the many diverse residential neighborhoods is important as is the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of existing roadways and infrastructure systems.
- Enhance Greenfield’s position in Franklin County as the leader for sustainable design/clean and renewable energy. As the economic center and largest town of Franklin County, Greenfield has taken a prominent role in promoting sustainable design and renewable energy throughout the region that includes promoting “green buildings.” Greenfield actively pursued and was awarded the designation as a “Green Community.” Greenfield entered into a purchase power agreement with AXIO Greenfield, LLC for development of a solar array on the City’s capped landfill.

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- *Plan and implement in a regional context.* Greenfield is part of a larger county-wide community. Greenfield is home to the County House of Corrections, County Court House and several Federal, State and County offices. As the largest municipality and the economic engine of Franklin County, the City of Greenfield takes a prominent leadership role in devising regional solutions to common problems.

### **CITY OF GREENFIELD PRIORITIES:**

#### **Create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Downtown**

- Strengthen and diversify the downtown business community
- Strengthen a sense of place by capturing and advancing the benefits of designation as the Crossroads Cultural District and Historic Districts
- Upgrade public facilities (roads, sidewalks, parking, streetscape, infrastructure (water, sewer, storm drainage, utilities including high speed broadband);
- Create new and upgrade existing housing; diversify the mix and type of housing in Downtown
- Expand and upgrade municipal facilities
  - New City Library (opening May 2023)
  - New Fire Station (construction completion expected fall 2023)
  - Create new Skateboard Park (construction completion expected summer 2023)
  - Main Street Improvements (construction 2026-2027)

#### **Expand and Diversify Tax Base**

- Expand availability of Industrial zoned land to support expansion of advanced manufacturing sector
- Support the redevelopment of underutilized properties
  - Wilson's Department Store
  - Greenfield Community College Downtown Center (on the market)
  - First National Bank building
  - Mill buildings
  - Other small commercial properties

#### **Expand, update and harden city infrastructure to reduce municipal vulnerabilities and adapt to impact of climate change**

- Implement requirements of Inflow/Infiltration Corrective Consent Decree
- Upgrade waste water treatment plant
- Complete the build-out of municipal high speed broadband internet

#### **Enhance the quality of life for current and future residents of Greenfield and the region.**

- Improve the wellbeing of residents by ensuring access to affordable food, housing, transportation and health care
- Improve economic opportunities and reduce inequality by ensuring access to education and living wage employment opportunities.
- Expand access to and preservation of the natural environment